2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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persons with political or economic influence. Once a kin relationship is made known, it establishes a special tie between the two parties, and preferential treatment often follows; for kin are expected to help each other.

The ties of kinship can also be extended artificially by asking non-kin to become godparents or marriage witnesses. Although parents normally choose persons to fill these offices from among their parents, uncles and aunts, thus reinforcing already existing kin ties, they quite often ask influential non-kin to perform this function. While the obligations created by godparenthood in Malta, as in Italy, are not as demanding as they are in Spain, and Spanish America,[1] the godparent (*parrinu*) is expected to favour his godchild (*filjozz*), if not the child's father.[2] Thus the institution of godparenthood plays a part in the system of patronage. Influential persons, however, are more often asked to become marriage witnesses. This relationship is not enduring. When influential non-kin are asked to fill this office it is done as much to increase the prestige of the families of the couple getting married as it is to honour a patron.

There is constant informal contact between relatives living in the same village. These informal meetings strengthen kin ties and ensure that people have a wide knowledge of their kin. Thus a friend in Farrug was able to name 49 households in the village (20 per cent of the total) whose members were descended from his father's six siblings. Although the spread of this old man's family was unusual, no one in the village did not have some relatives living there. The many cross-cutting bonds of kinship thus reinforce the multiplex ties created by neighbourhood, common culture and shared devotion to common symbols, and bind together the inhabitants of a village into the tightly united community which outsiders see.

[1] See Gallatin Anderson, *A Survey of Italian God-parenthood* (The Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, No. 13; Berkeley, 1956), J. A. Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), pp. 107 f.; and Sidney W. Mintz and Eric R. Wolf, 'An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood (Compadrazgo),' *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, VI (1950), 341–68.

[2] The reciprocal term *xbin* is used between a godparent and the father of his godchild. Friends and even strangers often use it to address one another; it is a way of reducing social distance and making possible a more intimate association. Michael Kenny in his book, *A Spanish Tapestry* (London, Cohen and West, 1961), p. 72, notes that this is also an Andalusian custom.

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557 793 794 Most of the procuratorships and offices in the associations connected with the Church are conferred upon members of the circle of persons who figuratively, and often physically, surround the parish priest. They become his favourites by doing some of the hundred and one odd jobs for which he depends on volunteers. These include running messages, carrying chairs, arranging meetings and decorating the streets for feasts and other important occasions, such as the visit of the Archbishop. Acceptance into the circle and the rewards meted out vary, of course, according to the capabilities of the individuals concerned, and the character of the parish priest. Advancement is most rapid and the rewards most interesting where the parish priest is open to influence, and the job-seeker has the qualities of leadership discussed below. But people are loath to see their parish priest delegate too much of his authority to their fellows. Those who pursue power in the community by attaching themselves to the parish priest often incur a good measure of hostility. Most frequently they are accused by the village gossips of lining their pockets with their neighbour's money.

794 [796] The most important member of the circle surrounding the parish priest in Kortin is old Manwel, a retired school teacher. As procurator of the Confraternity of our Lady of Sorrows, he collects funds for and organizes the elaborate Good Friday procession. This is an event which attracts visitors from all over the island. He is also procurator of the Confraternity of St. Joseph, the village cemetery and the Mass legacies of the parish. He is one of the founders and a former vice-president and secretary of the Social Club, and a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. [575] Though no longer in the Band Club, he was once on its committee. For many years he was also on the committee which organized the annual festa. All these offices give him a greater voice in the administration of the parish and its ceremonial affairs than anyone except the parish priest.

IV

575 [554] The officers of the secular associations in a village generally enjoy high standing and wield considerable influence. The secular associations, though they vary, generally include a men's social club (usually a brass band club), a political party committee or

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[p.120]

CHAPTER VIII

The Village and the Outside World

Every Maltese is at the centre of a large network of kin relations. Thus, when the need arises, many people are able to move along the intricate channels of consanguinity and affinity to establish personal contact with influential persons. It has also been noted that this network of kin can be extended artificially. Important persons, such as politicians, police officers, high civil servants and professionals are often invited to become godparents, marriage witnesses and confirmation sponsors. These relationships are constantly manipulated to bring individuals in touch with decision makers. This gives a personal content to many official decisions. Since most people honour the obligations of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood, requests which appeal to these values stand a good chance of a favourable reply. But a large network of kinsmen can also be a liability to a civil servant, for the favourable treatment he is expected to give a kinsman often conflicts with the civil service ethic of impartiality. This can place persons in authority in awkward positions, since the refusal of a request may seriously affect either their personal relations or their professional integrity. Maltese civil servants thus work under pressure which is quite unfamiliar to their counterparts in larger, less intimately related societies.

II

Another method of handling contacts with authority is through influential patrons. By 'patron' I mean a person who uses his influence to assist and protect some other person, who then becomes his 'client'. In a Catholic society there is a strong ideological basis for a system of patronage, for there is great similarity between the function of saints and mortal patrons. Michael Kenny points to this correspondence in his study of patronage in Spain[1] and, in general terms, his analysis is equally applicable to

[1] 'Patterns of Patronage in Spain', *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (January 1960), pp. 14–23.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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Malta. He sees the patronage system in Spain as a pyramidal structure incorporating both the natural and the spiritual worlds. At the top is God, the supreme patron who is not dependent upon anyone. At the base are the persons who have no clients. Between these lowly clients and God there are many different ranks of patrons, each of whom has his own small pyramid of clients. They, in turn, are clients dependent upon other higher and more influential persons. The patrons of each rank form a group which asks favours from one another on behalf of their clients.

The intermediaries between man and God are the saints, who are closer to God than man is. A person who seeks to influence the decision of a higher authority similarly looks for a person who, by virtue of his kin relation or social position, is closer to the decision maker than he. In view of the functional similarity of saints to living patrons, it should not come as a surprise that the word for patron in Maltese is 'saint' (*qaddis*; plural *qaddisin*). Several proverbs underline the important role that patrons play in Maltese social life. Here are two: 'Without saints you can't get to heaven' (*Minghajr qaddisin ma titlax il-ġenna*); and 'You can do nothing without saints' (*Minghajr qaddisin ma taghmel xejn*). Another points to the fact that any patron-client relationship is not without obligation, even danger, for the client: 'He who fattens you will kill you' (*Min semmnek joqtlok*).

Who are these 'saints', these men of influence? For the most part they are people who have already been encountered, albeit in a slightly different capacity. They are the professionals, the civil servants and, in general, the wealthy and powerful. They are persons, respected for their education and social standing in the world outside the village, who can deal as equals with other important people and decision-makers, many of whom are their relatives and former classmates. Their patronage is sought by individuals and groups alike. They are often asked to become god-parents, and they are called on to handle the ceremonial, business and political relations of clubs. They are also called on to help secure employment, building permits, hawkers licences or a long-delayed hearing at the law courts. Generally speaking, villagers choose patrons from the circle of influential people with whom they have the closest contact: the local professionals, the parish priest and clergy, the important landlords, all of whom command respect outside the village. Some clients are related to their

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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patrons; others have established fairly close contact with them through business relations.

The patronage of the parish priest has traditionally been important. Not only are all villagers his spiritual clients, but he is also a source of charity and assistance in many fields. He serves his parishioners individually in the capacity of legal adviser, character reference and often also as letter-writer and banker. He frequently argues their claims against the government. He also represents the interests of the community at large, and attempts, often successfully, to obtain improved public amenities such as new roads, street lighting and so on. At least, this is the role that he occupied until the introduction of representative government.

III

Influence through the networks of personal relations and patrons is the traditional method of handling contacts with authority. It still operates when representative government is in abeyance. But the advent of elected government introduced a new set of relations, and provided a new focus of power. Political parties and professional politicians provided new and surer channels of influence and sources of patronage, though they have not replaced the old ones. The villager now uses both old and new channels, separately or together.

The organization of all parties, at least before Mintoff reorganized the Labour Party, was rather simple. Party interests were represented in the villages by personal canvassers or party agents, as well as by the candidates themselves. The old Labour Party under Paul Boffa had a number of village party committees. When the party was returned to power, patronage and influence flowed abundantly, and brought the whole structure into vigorous life. The canvassers became important people who could pass along requests and schedule appointments with the local MLA's and even the Ministers. They also helped the local MLA's prepare the lists of people who were to be given jobs, for until 1955 most of the lower-grade industrial labourers with the Public Works Department were employed upon the recommendation of the local MLA's. Politicians who held office before 1955 often told me that making out the employment rosters and dealing with the daily queue of job-seekers were among their most difficult and

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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1962 elections, three-fourths are members of the professional classes. The remainder are persons who, for the most part, have risen to positions of influence through party and trade union hierarchies. 463 665

TABLE 8. Occupation of Candidates Elected to the 1962 Malta Legislative Assembly [162]

OCCUPATION	POLITICAL PARTY				
	Nationalist	*Labour*	*Other*	*Total*	*Percentage*
Professional	24	9	5	38	76
Administrative	1	4	2	7	14
Skilled Labour	—	3	2	5	10
Total	25	16	9	50	100

The way a political candidate recruits a following depends upon his status and party. All candidates recruit support through their relatives and friends; and all usually have a following in their own villages outside this circle of relatives. To get this, they must usually be successful politicians at the village level. It is for this reason that so many politicians are also presidents of local band and social clubs, and even of some of the lay apostolate societies. Next, every candidate must establish contact with the people in his electoral district outside the village. Since there are usually at least five candidates from each party standing in every district, each normally concentrates his campaign on one part of the district. He does this by making frequent rounds of all the band and social clubs and important wine shops in his territory. There he listens to complaints and requests and, in general, tries to establish a reputation as a generous and approachable person without committing himself to do specific favours. But above all, it is important for him to meet many people, for the Maltese voter does not like to give his first vote to a person he, or at least some member of his immediate family, does not know personally. Finally, all candidates tour their districts just before the election and make speeches. 666

Candidates who are doctors, lawyers, notaries, architects and so on, have a decided advantage. As professionals, they already have close personal contact with a large number of clients, many of whom are bound to them by debts, or obligated to them for help and favours. These obligations are important, for the Maltese villager does not like to receive something for nothing, and he 557 662 666

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557 662 666 does not rest easily until he has repaid it. This is as true of corporate groups such as the band clubs as it is of individuals Frequently the financial circumstances of the client, or the very nature of the favour, make it difficult or impossible for him to meet his obligation. His vote, and those of his family, provide the logical and accepted means to this end. This extends the relationship between patron and client to include that between politician and constituent.

66 Candidates who do not have the professional qualifications or high status necessary to recruit a following in this way are at a disadvantage. This is especially true for many of the Labour Party candidates, whose education and social standing at times compare unfavourably with those of their rivals. It was principally to overcome this handicap that the Labour Party sought to strengthen the party at the expense of individual candidates. It did this by limiting the system of political patronage which prevailed under previous governments and curbing the influence of the canvassers. In fact, the MLP officially forbade its candidates to employ canvassers. (Though, of course, many candidates have informal canvassers in their friends, relatives and clients.) At the same time, the party directed its propaganda at building up the image of the party and its leader. Labour supporters were constantly urged to vote for the party and not for individuals. By and large its campaign has been most successful. Its sympathizers not only vote for candidates who do not conform to the traditional image of the professional patron-politician, but they also vote across class lines, i.e. the teacher voting for an ex-dockyard fitter.

578 621 65 666 All candidates have to take into account the parochial rivalries which often cut across their districts. This is particularly true of the rivalry between the festa partiti. It has been noted that there is often a political polarity between festa partiti in the same village, and that sometimes the rivalry is so strong that partisans vote against a political party simply because a leading member of the rival partit is a candidate for it. But the number of people who place loyalty to their festa partit before support of a political party is declining. Nonetheless, if parochial rivalry no longer determines which party will get the votes, it very often decides which of the candidates within the party will. Many people have assured me that it is almost unheard of for a member of a festa partit to vote for a member of the rival partit, even though both support the